

RATIONALE and DESCRIPTION OF SURVEY CONTENT

Washington State Healthy Youth Survey (HYS) 2010

This document describes the content, development, and design of the survey. It then provides the importance of and rationale for including each of the survey questions by topic area.

Survey Content Overview

The Washington State Healthy Youth Survey (HYS) 2010 contains questions related to:

- Student demographic information (e.g., age, grade level, race/ethnic background).
- Unintentional and intentional injury (e.g., depression/suicide, seat belt use, fighting, and weapon carrying).
- Physical activity and dietary behaviors (e.g., fruit and vegetable consumption).
- Alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use.
- Related risk and protective factors (including community, school, and peer-individual factors).
- Access to school-based services.
- Sexual behavior (schools can opt to administer a survey version that excludes these questions).

Survey Development

Prior to every administration of the HYS, survey questions are reviewed and modified to fit state and local needs. Staff from the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), the Department of Health (DOH), the Department of Social and Health Services' Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery (DBHR), the Department of Commerce, the Family Policy Council (FPC), and the Liquor Control Board (LCB) have collaborated on the content of the survey. Representatives from local health jurisdictions, schools, ESDs, community mobilization, the prevention/intervention field, and the University of Washington were also invited to be involved in shaping the content of the survey.

Optional Survey Questions

Optional questions about family relationships, harassment, dating violence, abuse history, and sexual behavior are on a perforated page that can be removed before survey administration. Examples of these optional questions are also included in this document.

Survey Forms

For Grades 8, 10, and 12, there are three variations of the survey, Form A, Form B, and Form NS (an alternative version of Form B that excludes the sexual behavior questions). Having three forms allows the inclusion of more questions than otherwise possible while ensuring that the survey is not too long. Also, because the sexual behavior questions are new, in 2010 we are providing Form NS which allows schools the option of not using the sexual behavior questions without having to tear off the optional tear-off form. There are 34 questions that are “core,” meaning they are on all three Forms A, B, and NS.

The survey forms come to the school in packages that are alternated Form A, Form B, Form A, Form B, etc (or Form A, Form NS, Form A, Form NS, etc.) —so that every other student takes a different form.

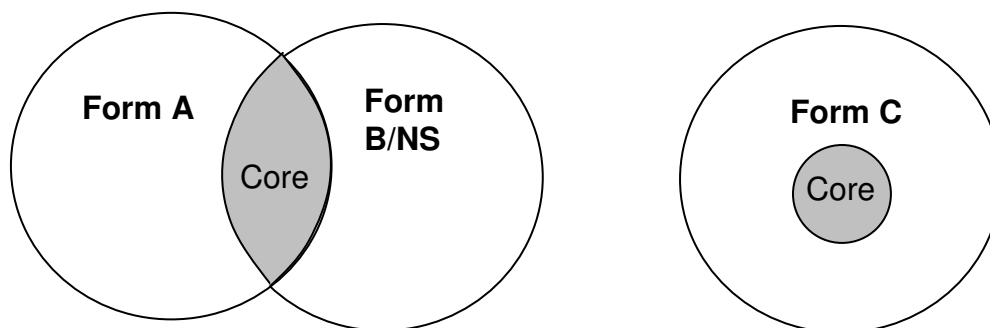
Form A primarily contains:

- Demographics (core)
- Alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs (core)
- Violence-related items (core)
- School (core), individual, and peer-individual risk and protective factors
- Depression (core)

Forms B/NS primarily contain:

- Demographics (core)
- Alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs (core)
- School risk and protective factors (core)
- Violence-related items (core)
- Nutrition and physical activity
- Safety behaviors
- Depression/suicide
- Additional tobacco indicators

For Grade 6 there is only one version of the survey, Form C. Form C is a shortened and simplified combination of both Forms A and B. The figure shows how Forms A and B have separate questions, but also have core questions on both surveys. Form C is a single form that has some individual and core questions from Forms A, B, and NS.



Survey Question Sources

Survey questions are chosen from previous Washington survey instruments or national established and tested surveys. New question added to the HYS are field tested with students.

Form A questions primarily come from:

- Communities that Care Survey
- Monitoring the Future
- Recommendations from OSPI, DBHR, and the University of Washington

Forms B/NS questions primarily come from:

- Youth Risk Behavior Survey
- Youth Tobacco Survey
- Recommendations from DOH and local stakeholders

Survey Questions and Rationale

Sample survey questions and their rationale are presented by category below. An asterisk (*) indicates the question is also included on Form C (Grade 6). A double asterisk (**) indicates the question is also included on Form C, but the wording is simplified. A cross (†) indicates that the question is asked on the optional portion of the survey.

Demographic Questions

Gathering basic demographic information helps to verify that the students participating in the survey are representative of the statewide student population in these grades. In addition, basic background information allows for examination of trends and differences in these health risk behaviors among students of varying background characteristics.

Sample questions:

- How old are you?*
- How do you describe yourself: American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian or Asian American, Black or African-American, Hispanic or Latino/Latina, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, White or Caucasian, or Other?*

Unintentional Injury Behavior Questions

Unintentional injury is the leading cause of death for Washington citizens aged 1 to 44. Some of the target behaviors of interest in the HYS are seat belt use, bicycle and motorcycle helmet use, and drinking and driving.

State and local health jurisdictions run programs to increase awareness around wearing seatbelts, helmets, and life vests and about the dangers of drunk driving. These programs strive to prevent injuries and death from motor vehicle, bicycle, and boating accidents.

Sample question:

- During the past 30 days, how many times did you ride in a car or other vehicle driven by someone who had been drinking alcohol?**

Intentional Injury Behavior Questions

Intentional injury behaviors of interest include fighting, weapon carrying, and suicidal thoughts and behaviors. Suicide is the second leading cause of death among 15- to 24-year-olds. Fighting, weapon carrying, and attempted suicide are health risk behaviors associated with threats to personal safety, future injury, and death.

Sample question:

- During the past 30 days, on how many days did you: Carry a weapon such as a gun, knife, or club for self-protection or because you thought you might need it in a fight?

Safety and Violent Behavior Questions

Reducing violent behaviors such as bullying, harassment, physical abuse, and dating violence are important goals of state and local programs. Current federal and state goals for public health and education include the assurance of “safe and drug-free schools and communities” to promote student learning. The HYS includes questions designed to determine student safety and the extent to which students engage in selected violent behaviors.

Sample question:

- In the last 30 days, how often have you been bullied?

Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drug Use

One of the target behaviors of interest in the HYS is the extent to which students have used—and are using—alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs. Asking these questions again maintains seamless local and statewide assessments of changes in patterns of substance use over time for Washington’s students. Further, these questions provide important data-driven direction for prevention both locally and across the state.

Other core items of the HYS measure cigarette smoking, alcohol and drug use, and physical fighting. Tobacco use is considered the most important preventable cause of death in the United States, and many smokers begin smoking in adolescence. Both alcohol and drug use (especially heavy use) are associated with other problem behaviors in youth such as school failure and delinquency.

Sample questions:

- During the past 30 days, on how many days did you: Drink a glass, can, or bottle of alcohol (beer, wine, wine coolers, hard liquor)?*
- During the past 30 days, on how many days did you smoke cigarettes?*

Access to School-Based Prevention Services

Schools are increasingly perceived as a clearinghouse for students to access services. When schools do provide these services, students must be aware of their availability. Therefore, the HYS includes questions related to access to services.

Sample question:

- Does your school provide a counselor, intervention specialist, or other school staff member for students to discuss problems with alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs?

Physical Activity and Dietary Behavior Questions

Exercise and physical activity have both immediate and long-term benefits. Proper nutrition is essential for health and well-being. The combination of moderate physical activity and proper nutrition contributes to maintaining a healthy weight.

Sample question:

- How many sodas or pops did you drink yesterday? (Do not count diet soda.)*

Health Status and Health Care

The Healthy People 2010 objectives emphasize the importance of health education and access to health care services for preventing disease and minimizing the long-term effects of disease. The HYS includes questions on physical and mental disabilities, asthma, and diabetes. Questions are also asked about access to health care and health-related education in schools.

Sample question:

- Has a doctor or nurse ever told you that you have asthma?*

Risk and Protective Factors

Risk factors are characteristics of individuals and their families, schools, and communities that make them more vulnerable to ill health and poor lifestyle choices. Similarly, protective factors exert a positive influence or buffer against the negative influence of risk in these social environments.

The HYS includes many questions directly related to health, but most of the risk and protective factors measured in the survey are associated with behaviors such as substance use, violence, and staying in school. The presence of multiple risk factors predicts an increased likelihood that an individual will engage in these behaviors, whereas the presence of protective factors helps to buffer the effect of risk factors and increase resilience.

These questions relate to the students themselves, their peers, their families, their schools, and the communities in which they live. Past survey responses have highlighted the important relationships that guide school prevention and intervention programs across the state.

Community Risk Factors

These risk factors include laws and norms favorable towards drug use, perceived availability of drugs, perceived availability of handguns, and low neighborhood attachment.

Sample question:

- I'd like to get out of my neighborhood or community.

Community Protective Factors

These protective factors include opportunities for prosocial involvement and rewards for prosocial involvement.

Sample question:

- Which of the following activities for people your age are available in your community?:
Sports teams

School Risk Factors

These factors include academic failure and low commitment to school.

Sample question:

- Think back over the past year in school. How often did you enjoy being in school?*

School Protective Factors

These factors include opportunities for prosocial involvement and rewards for prosocial involvement.

Sample question:

- I feel safe at my school.*

Peer-Individual Risk Factors

These factors include early initiation of drug use, early initiation of antisocial behavior, favorable attitudes toward drug use, perceived risk of drug use, friends' use of drugs, rewards for antisocial involvement, intentions to use, and interactions with antisocial peers.

Sample question:

- How much do you think people risk harming themselves if they: Smoke one or more packs of cigarettes per day?*

Peer-Individual Protective Factors

These factors include social skills, belief in the moral order, interaction with prosocial peers, and prosocial involvement.

Sample question:

- Think about your four best friends (the friends you feel closest to). In the past year (12 months), how many of your best friends have. . . Participated in clubs, organizations, or activities at school?*

Family Risk Factors

These factors include poor family management.

Sample question:

- My parents ask if I've gotten my homework done.†

Family Protective Factors

These factors include opportunities for prosocial involvement and rewards for prosocial involvement.

Sample question:

- If you skipped school, would you be caught by your parents? †

Sexual Behavior

Sexual behavior questions can provide useful information for how and where to target appropriate interventions for preventing pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases with limited resources. It can also provide useful information in reshaping social norms by giving students who have not had sex an opportunity to be represented and providing all students with an accurate representation of the fact that not all teenagers are sexually active. Premature sexual behavior is associated with a variety of other health risk behaviors so the

information can be used to generate support for other school and community-based services and programs, not just sexual health education. The questions we will include are from the middle school national Youth Risk Behavioral Survey.

Sample question:

- Have you ever had sexual intercourse?

Validity and Honesty

Two questions are included to help determine how honestly youth answer the survey. These questions, along with other consistency checks, are used to determine if surveys are valid.

Sample question:

- How honest were you in filling out this survey?*